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Silk-raising¹ is therefore encouraged as a means of stopping the ruination of the timber. It is a very simple matter, involving the least possible amount of toil, and at the same time being on the whole very profitable. Moreover, the Burmese mulberry-bush, which is quite distinct from the ordinary *Morus Indica*, does not grow well on the alluvial soil of the low lands, while it flourishes on the hillsides, where the Yabeins mostly live. The silk obtained from the caterpillars fed on the leaves of the hill-shrubs is very much better than that obtained from the mulberry-bushes of the plains. Thus it happens that all parties are likely to be pleased. The English Government foresters will gradually find means of putting an end to the timber-burning, which they detest; the richer Burmans down in the lowlands will neither have the temptation to increase their income at the expense of their piety, nor will they have that piety shocked by an organised system of taking life; while the Yabeins in their own hill-villages will be allowed to do as they please, and will accumulate tidy sums of money into the bargain.

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It is certain that neither the silkworm nor the mulberry-bush is indigenous in Burma. It is said that the first cocoons were brought from China in the reign of King Anawrata Saw. Others again maintain that the Chinese taught the Shans, the Shans the Karens, and these the Burmese. In some places among the more superstitious hill-tribes the mulberry-tree receives a kind of worship. In any case it is more probable that both the silkworm and the tree were introduced from Western China, down the valley of the Irrawaddy or the Salween, than that they came over the hills, through turbulent mountaineers, from India. The shrub does not grow much more than ten feet high, and seldom produces good succulent leaves for a longer period than three years. After that the plants are apt to get coarse and stringy, and the cultivators ordinarily abandon the plantation, or root out the bushes and plant new ones. As the shrub will not flower, it is propagated by cuttings, and new shoots are constantly being planted so that there may be an unfailing supply of young and fresh leaves. The Burmans call it the posabin, "the tree the silkworms eat." There is another tree—that from the bark of which the coarse paper

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used for the para-baik, or note-books, is got—the leaves of which the caterpillars will eat ; but the silk thus obtained is much coarser, and recourse is had therefore to the mahlaing-bin only when the mulberry-bushes give out. In any case, however, it is undeniable that, as yet, the silk produced in Burma is of a very inferior kind. It is rough and coarse ; but it is all the better suited for the strong lungyis and pasos in use for ordinary every-day wear among the people, the finer fabrics all coming from China or Manchester.

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The whole process of growing the silk is of the simplest possible character, and is exactly suited to indolent people who have no conscientious objections to the killing of the pupæ. Silk can, indeed, be spun from the cocoons, out of which the moths have escaped ; but it is very much coarser even than the ordinary silk, and commands somewhat less than half the price. Except the occasional trouble of strolling out for a few leaves, there is almost nothing to be done ; and the whole operations are carried on in the rickety bamboo hut of the cultivator, within a yard or two of the place where his food is cooked. The caterpillars do not seem to care a bit for the smoke or the dirt ; and the pupæ are equally callous to the fumes of tobacco which circle about them constantly during the few days that remain to them before they are stewed. The female moths are placed upon pieces of coarse cloth, with palm-leaf lids put over them. The eggs stick to the cloth, and form a compact little circle. A day or two over a week suffices to produce the larvæ, and these are then thrown upon flat trays, made of strips of bamboo plaited closely together, and guarded by a slightly raised edge. For four or five days the little caterpillars are fed on finely-chopped mulberry-leaves, the tenderest that can be found. After that they change their skins, and, beyond getting plenty of leaves, do not receive much attention. They are sturdy creatures, and they would need to be, for they are often very roughly treated. The trays are scarcely ever cleaned, and if the larvæ are to be shifted from one tray to another, they are scraped up in handfuls and thrown down as if they were so many chips of wood. Gauze or mosquito netting is usually thrown over the trays to keep away the ichneumon flies, which otherwise would deposit